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Exploring the Impact of Academic Libraries on English Education Students: A Mixed-Methods Study of Utilization and Student Experience

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Abstract. Academic libraries play a critical role in supporting student learning, yet the relationship between utilization, satisfaction, and user experience remains insufficiently examined in specific disciplinary contexts. This study examined students' utilization, satisfaction, and experiences with library services at Romblon State University – San Fernando Campus using a convergent mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were gathered through survey responses measuring patterns of library use and levels of satisfaction across resources, physical attributes, personnel services, accessibility, and programs, while qualitative data explored students' lived experiences and perceptions. Students frequently used the library, primarily for studying and collaborative work, and reported high levels of satisfaction across service dimensions. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant relationship between frequency of visits and satisfaction, suggesting that perceived service quality and overall user experience are more influential than usage patterns alone. Qualitative findings further emphasize the role

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of the library as an academic support hub, a conducive learning environment, and a space that fosters personal growth and meaningful staff interaction, while also identifying areas for improvement, such as Wi-Fi connectivity, collaborative spaces, and digital integration. The study underscores the need for academic libraries to prioritize service quality, user-centered design, and technological enhancement to sustain relevance in evolving educational contexts. These findings provide evidence-based insights for institutional policy, library management, and future research on student-centered academic library development.

Keywords: academic library utilization; student satisfaction; library services; student engagement; higher education

1. Introduction

Academic libraries are increasingly recognized as essential learning infrastructures in higher education, playing a vital role in supporting academic engagement, research productivity, and student learning outcomes. Beyond their traditional function as repositories of books and scholarly materials, academic libraries now serve as dynamic environments that provide access to print and digital resources, collaborative learning spaces, instructional support, and student-centered services (Rabelo et al., 2024; Scoulas et al., 2024). As higher education institutions respond to evolving pedagogical approaches and technological changes, the effectiveness of academic libraries is no longer measured solely by collection size or circulation statistics. Instead, it is assessed based on how meaningfully they support students' academic experiences (Mwanitimwa & Msoffe, 2025; Ramachandragouda et al., 2025).

Existing research highlights the strong association between academic library engagement and student success. Studies have shown that effective library utilization contributes to improved academic performance, enhanced information literacy, and higher levels of learning satisfaction (Rabelo et al., 2024; Scoulas et al., 2024). Students' interactions with library resources, services, and facilities are influenced by factors such as accessibility, service quality, physical environment, and institutional support. Contemporary scholarship further emphasizes that students' perceptions and experiences of library services are central to understanding library effectiveness, as these experiential dimensions shape both utilization behaviors and satisfaction levels (Barfi et al., 2023). Variations in library usage frequency and patterns among students have also been documented across different academic contexts (Gyau et al., 2021).

Despite sustained investments in library infrastructure and digital resources, challenges remain in maximizing utilization and ensuring consistently high user satisfaction. Studies show that students may underutilize services due to limited awareness, changing information-seeking habits, digital transformation, and perceived gaps between services and academic needs. Bibliometric analyses of library and information science research have shown that issues related to user behavior, service relevance, and technological innovation continue to dominate the field. These trends reflect ongoing challenges in aligning library services with

evolving academic demands (Alfouzan et al., 2023; Magadán-Díaz & Rivas-García, 2022; Majhi & Mukherjee, 2024).

Moreover, positive perceptions of library services do not always result in frequent use, suggesting a complex relationship between satisfaction and utilization. These patterns highlight the need for integrated investigations that examine not only usage statistics but also students' lived experiences. Emerging scholarship further underscores the impact of artificial intelligence, technological integration, and service innovation on library attractiveness and user engagement (Jiang et al., 2025; Mwanitimwa & Msoffe, 2025). In this context, the present study responds to current research trends by exploring how utilization, satisfaction, and student experiences intersect within the academic library environment.

Within this broader landscape, English students represent a particularly relevant academic group for examining library engagement. English programs are inherently reading-intensive and research-oriented, requiring sustained access to diverse print and digital resources, extended study time, and supportive academic environments. As a result, English students rely heavily on academic libraries for tasks such as literary analysis, academic writing, and research development. While previous studies have explored general patterns of library utilization and satisfaction among university students, limited research has focused specifically on English students' experiences, particularly in public higher education institutions (Rabelo et al., 2024; Scoulas et al., 2024).

In addition, much of the existing literature prioritizes quantitative measures, often overlooking students' narratives and perceptions, which provide deeper insight into how library services are experienced and valued (Lee & Ocepek, 2022). While this study does not directly measure language proficiency outcomes such as fluency or accuracy, it focuses on how patterns of library utilization, satisfaction with services, and students' lived experiences contribute to the broader academic conditions that support learning. In this context, English students provide a meaningful lens through which to examine how academic libraries function as learning environments that facilitate engagement, resource access, and academic development.

Recent developments in higher education further intensify the need for comprehensive assessments of academic library services. The expansion of digital learning platforms, blended learning arrangements, inclusive education initiatives, and AI-supported services has reshaped students' expectations of library support (Mwanitimwa & Msoffe, 2025; Ramachandragouda et al., 2025; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2023). Contemporary research increasingly calls for approaches that integrate utilization patterns, satisfaction measures, and experiential perspectives within a single inquiry to provide a more holistic understanding of student-library interaction. However, in many institutional contexts, especially in public universities, empirical studies that combine these dimensions at the program level remain limited.

Despite the growing body of literature on academic library utilization and user satisfaction, several gaps remain evident. Most existing studies focus on general student populations and rely predominantly on quantitative measures, often overlooking students' lived experiences and perceptions that provide deeper insights into how library services are used and valued. Moreover, limited research has examined these dimensions within specific disciplinary contexts, particularly among English students in public higher education institutions. As a result, an integrated understanding lacks how utilization patterns, satisfaction levels, and experiential factors interact to shape student engagement with academic libraries. This study addresses these gaps by employing a mixed-methods approach to examine both the measurable and experiential dimensions of library use among English students.

Against this backdrop, the present study, titled "Exploring the impact of academic libraries on English education students: A mixed-methods study of utilization and student experience", seeks to examine how students of English engage with academic library services in a public higher education institution. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Describe the demographic profile of English students in terms of academic program, year level, sex, and age.
2. Determine the patterns of library utilization among English students with respect to frequency of library visits, duration of each visit, and purpose of library use.
3. Assess students' satisfaction with library services in terms of library resources, physical attributes, personnel services, library hours and availability, ease of access, and library events and programs, and further examine these through students' lived experiences and perceptions to provide integrated quantitative and qualitative insights.
4. Examine the relationship between the frequency of library visits and students' level of satisfaction with library services.
5. Identify significant differences in library utilization patterns and satisfaction levels among English students when grouped according to selected demographic characteristics.

This study is relevant not only to the institutional context in which it is conducted but also to other higher education settings seeking to strengthen academic library services and student learning support. Many universities face similar challenges related to maximizing library use, aligning services with disciplinary needs, and ensuring positive student experiences in both physical and digital library environments. By integrating patterns of library utilization, levels of user satisfaction, and English students' narratives, this study offers evidence-based insights that can inform library development, enhance learning support for English programs, and contribute to broader scholarly discussions on student-centered academic library practices.

1.2 Significance of Study

The findings provide evidence-based insights for library administrators, educators, and policymakers in enhancing service delivery, improving learning

environments, and supporting discipline-specific academic needs. In addition, the study contributes to scholarly discourse by integrating utilization patterns, satisfaction measures, and students' experiential perspectives, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of academic library engagement. To further situate the present study within existing scholarship, the following section reviews relevant literature on library utilization, user satisfaction, and students' experiential engagement in academic libraries.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

The review of related literature and studies presents existing empirical and theoretical works that contextualize this study. It does so by examining students' demographic characteristics, patterns of library utilization, levels of user satisfaction, and lived experiences and perceptions of academic library services, thereby establishing the scholarly foundation and identifying gaps addressed by the present research.

2.1 Students' Demographic Patterns of Library Utilization in Higher Education

Recent literature underscores the notion that student experience in academic libraries is a multidimensional construct shaped by access to resources, quality of services, learning environments, and user-centered practices. The spatial and environmental dimensions of academic libraries have also been shown to significantly influence student engagement and satisfaction (Peng et al., 2022). Rabelo et al. (2024) demonstrated that students' engagement with library services is closely linked to academic success and is influenced by variations in discipline, learning needs, and institutional context. Similarly, Scoulas et al. (2024) adopted a holistic perspective, showing that library use is intertwined with campus engagement and psychological factors such as motivation and sense of belonging. This position is academic libraries as both learning and social spaces shaped by diverse user characteristics rather than homogeneous usage patterns.

Complementing these insights, other studies emphasize the role of demographic background and learning preferences in shaping library engagement. Matthews and Johnson (2023) found that first-generation college students tend to prefer print resources due to familiarity and perceived comprehension advantages, indicating that engagement differences stem from socio-educational contexts as much as from access. Ncube and Nglube (2025) highlighted the potential of learning analytics and personalized services to respond effectively to diverse student needs, while Zheng et al. (2024) stressed that physical and social library environments mediate student interactions and learning engagement. Collectively, these studies affirm that recognizing student diversity is essential for designing inclusive, adaptive library services and environments that foster meaningful engagement, satisfaction, and equitable learning experiences in higher education.

2.2 Library Utilization and User Satisfaction in Higher Education

Recent studies emphasize the close relationship between library utilization and user satisfaction in academic settings, highlighting how access to resources, service quality, and learning environments jointly shape user experiences. Barfi

et al. (2023) demonstrated that although academic library users are generally aware of and actively utilize available resources, services, and facilities, perceived service quality often falls short of expectations, particularly in responsiveness and alignment with diverse user needs, resulting in varying satisfaction levels across demographic groups. These findings suggest that utilization alone does not guarantee positive user perceptions, reinforcing the need to examine qualitative aspects of service delivery alongside usage patterns.

Complementing this perspective, Tuble and Panhilason (2024), in a Philippine academic library context, established that higher levels of access and utilization of both print and digital collections, research databases, and learning spaces are strongly associated with increased user satisfaction. Their findings highlight the importance of adequate resources, conducive physical environments, and user-centered service delivery in promoting frequent library use and positive user evaluations. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of continuous assessment and integrated, user-focused management approaches in academic libraries, providing a strong empirical foundation for examining how coordinated access, utilization, and service quality contribute to meaningful user experiences and the achievement of institutional academic goals.

2.3 Relationship between Library Utilization and User Satisfaction

According to Bawasanta et al. (2025), despite student reports of high satisfaction and strong preference for library facilities, services, and collections, these positive perceptions exhibited only weak positive correlations with actual library utilization. This suggests that factors such as study habits, academic demands, and access to alternative digital resources may influence students' engagement beyond satisfaction alone. Complementing this, Pang et al. (2025) demonstrated that library utilization and user satisfaction are closely intertwined through psychological factors, particularly usage anxiety, showing that students' comfort and confidence in using library resources significantly affect both how often they use the library and how satisfied they feel. Together, these studies highlight the complexity of the utilization-satisfaction relationship, affirming that while satisfaction is important, effective library engagement is shaped by a combination of perceptual, behavioral, and psychological factors in higher education contexts.

2.4 Students' Lived Experiences and Perceptions of Library Services

Lee and Ocepek (2022) demonstrated the value of qualitative, diary-based methods in capturing users' lived information-creating experiences, revealing how perceptions, motivations, and affective dimensions of information behavior unfold over time and are often overlooked in survey-based approaches. Complementing this, Rabelo et al. (2024) showed through bibliometric and thematic analyses that students' experiences in academic libraries are shaped by perceptions of services, physical spaces, accessibility, emotional comfort, and institutional support, all of which influence engagement and academic success beyond mere usage statistics. Similarly, research on students' interpretations of library environments confirms that spatial design, service availability, and social atmosphere significantly affect learning engagement and peer interaction, collectively underscoring the importance of qualitative, experience-centered approaches in understanding library use as a socially and emotionally embedded

practice (Gocotano et al., 2021). Drawing from the reviewed literature, the study developed a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships among demographic characteristics, library utilization, satisfaction, and students' experiences.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, showing the relationship among students' demographic characteristics, library utilization, satisfaction, and experiences. The framework assumes that students' academic program, year level, sex, and age influence how they access and use library services. These characteristics may affect the frequency, duration, and purpose of library visits, which reflect students' level of academic engagement.

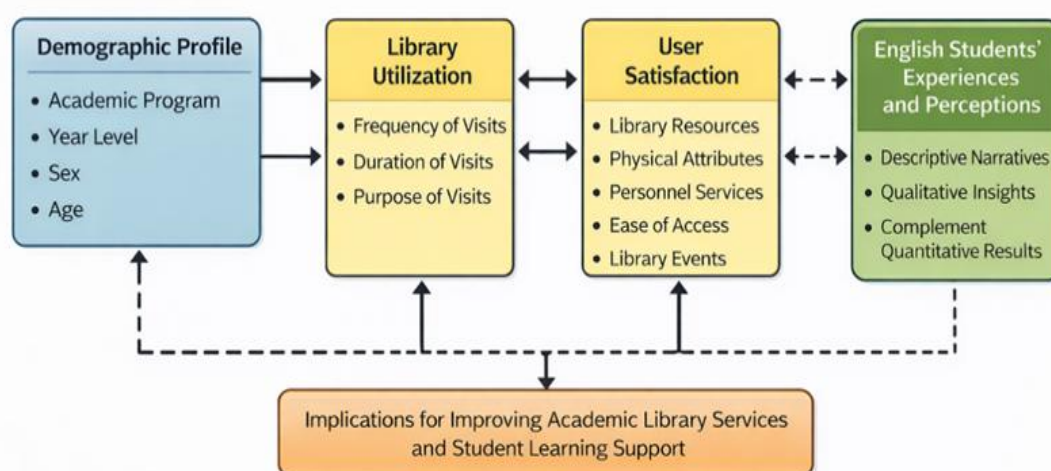


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of students' library utilization, satisfaction, and experiences

Library utilization is linked to user satisfaction, including perceptions of resources, facilities, personnel services, accessibility, and programs. The framework suggests that meaningful use of the library can enhance satisfaction, while positive experiences can encourage continued utilization. In addition, students' narratives and perceptions provide qualitative insights into how they experience library services. Together, these components generate a comprehensive understanding of how demographic factors, usage patterns, and satisfaction contribute to improving academic library services and supporting student success. Guided by this conceptual framework, the study adopted an appropriate methodological approach to examine the identified variables and their interrelationships.

2.6 Study Variables

The study examined key variables related to academic library engagement. Independent variables included students' demographic characteristics, such as academic program, year level, sex, and age. Dependent variables included patterns of library utilization, such as frequency, duration, and purpose of visits, as well as levels of student satisfaction with library resources, facilities, personnel services, accessibility, and programs. In addition, qualitative variables included

students' experiences and perceptions of library services, which provided deeper insights into user engagement.

3. Methodology

Given the limited number of studies integrating patterns of library utilization, user satisfaction, and students' lived experiences in a single inquiry, this study employed a mixed-methods research approach to generate a comprehensive understanding of English students' engagement with academic library services. The study was conducted at Romblon State University–San Fernando Campus (RSU–SFU) during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year.

3.1 Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted, consistent with the framework advanced by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). This design involves the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data. Each data set is analyzed separately, and the findings are integrated during interpretation. The design was appropriate for the present study, as it allowed numerical patterns of library utilization and satisfaction to be examined alongside students' narratives and perceptions, thereby strengthening the explanatory depth and validity of the results. Such an integrative approach aligns with contemporary educational research that emphasizes examining both contextual and motivational components to better understand learning-related outcomes (Ivanova & Michaelides, 2022).

3.2 Research Method

The quantitative component focused on assessing the frequency, duration, and purposes of library use, as well as levels of student satisfaction with library resources, facilities, and services. These variables were selected because they represent key indicators of students' engagement with academic libraries and are commonly used in evaluating library effectiveness and user experience. The qualitative component explored English students' experiences and perceptions of library services through narrative accounts. The integration of these methods enabled the study to triangulate statistical trends with experiential data, providing a more holistic understanding of student–library engagement.

3.3 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at RSU–SFC in the Romblon province. For the quantitative phase, 248 undergraduate students, representing approximately 15% of the total enrolled population ($N = 1651$) across the Teacher Education, Business Administration and Management, and Technology departments, were selected using proportionate random sampling. For the qualitative phase, nine students (three from each department) were purposively selected based on their regular use of the campus library for academic purposes. The sample size was deemed appropriate for qualitative inquiry, as it allows for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences while ensuring manageable and meaningful data analysis. The selection prioritized information-rich cases that could provide detailed insights aligned with the study objectives. This participant selection ensured representation of varied academic contexts, while capturing information-rich experiences relevant to the study objectives.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Two primary data collection instruments were utilized. A researcher-developed survey questionnaire was employed to gather quantitative data on demographic characteristics, patterns of library utilization, and levels of satisfaction with library services, using a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to collect qualitative data, allowing participants to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and narratives related to library use. Both instruments underwent content validation by subject experts, including the research adviser and panel members, to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Necessary revisions were made prior to data collection. While reliability testing, such as internal consistency measures, was not conducted, the instrument was carefully developed and validated by subject experts to ensure its adequacy for the study.

The use of a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews was deemed appropriate for the objectives of this study. The survey questionnaire allowed for the efficient collection of quantitative data from a relatively large number of respondents, enabling the identification of patterns in library utilization and levels of student satisfaction. Compared to data collection methods such as observation or experimental designs, surveys are more suitable for capturing self-reported behaviors and perceptions across multiple variables in a structured and measurable manner.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews provided flexibility in exploring students' lived experiences and perceptions in greater depth. Unlike fully structured interviews, this approach allowed participants to elaborate on their responses while still ensuring that key themes relevant to the study objectives were consistently addressed. Compared to purely quantitative instruments, the inclusion of qualitative interviews enabled the study to capture contextual, emotional, and experiential dimensions of library use, thereby enriching the interpretation of findings and supporting a more comprehensive understanding of student engagement with academic library services.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the campus administration and library authorities. Quantitative data were collected through the administration of the validated questionnaire to the selected respondents. Qualitative data were gathered through scheduled individual interviews conducted in settings conducive to open and reflective sharing. Ethical protocols, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality, were strictly observed throughout the data collection process.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' profiles, utilization patterns, and satisfaction levels, while Spearman's rho, independent *t*-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to examine relationships and group differences.

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis, following the systematic procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification and refinement of themes, and interpretation of patterns reflecting students' shared experiences and perceptions. To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, coding was conducted systematically, and themes were reviewed and refined to accurately represent participants' shared experiences.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was secured from the appropriate institutional authorities. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by removing identifying information and securely storing all research data. Following the procedures outlined above, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses are presented in the next section.

4. Results

Building on the presented results, this section discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and theoretical perspectives.

4.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Figure 2 presents the demographic profile of the survey respondents. The figure shows that the respondents were drawn from various academic programs, with the largest proportion coming from BSIT (Bachelor of Science in Information Technology), followed by BSBA (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) and BSHM (Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management), indicating a diverse academic representation among the respondents. Most respondents were in the second year, while first- and third-year students were also well represented. In terms of sex, the distribution was relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of males than females. Age-wise, the majority of the respondents fell within the 20-24-year age bracket, followed by those aged 19 years and below, while very few respondents belonged to the older age groups.

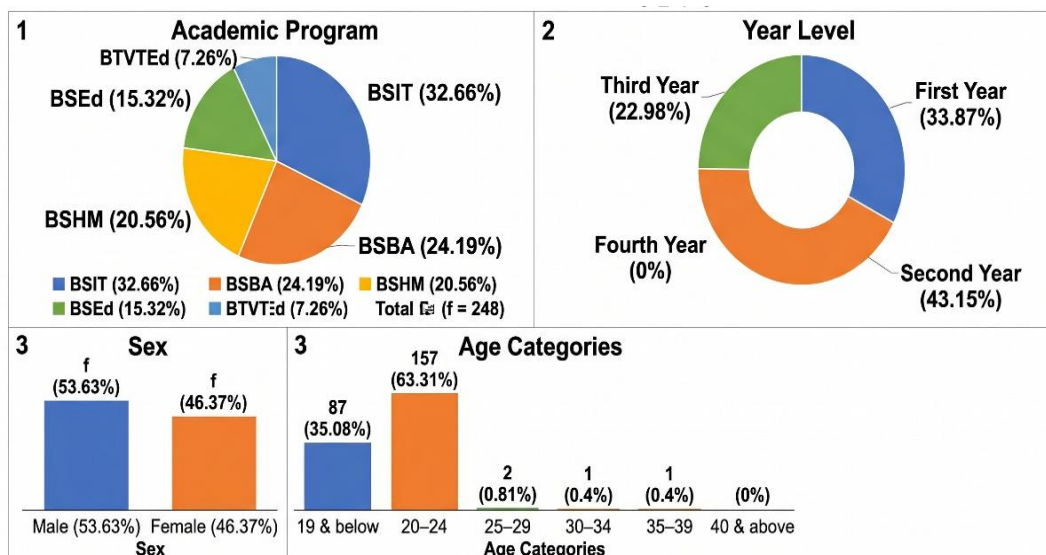


Figure 2: Demographic profile of respondents by academic program, year level, sex, and age

These findings imply that library utilization and satisfaction results largely reflect the perspectives of younger, undergraduate students from varied programs, suggesting that library services and resources should be primarily aligned with the academic and developmental needs of this dominant user group while still remaining inclusive of other demographics.

4.1.2 Patterns of library utilization among respondents with respect to frequency of library visits, duration of each visit, and purpose of library use

Figure 3 presents the patterns of library utilization in terms of frequency of visits, duration of stay, and purpose of use. Data relating to the frequency of library visits (Panel A) indicates that the majority of the respondents (67%) reported visiting the library several times a week, while smaller proportions visited once a week (16%), once a month (6%), or rarely (10%). This indicates that the library plays a regular and consistent role in students' academic routines. Data on the duration of each visit (Panel B) show that most respondents (68%) spent 30 minutes to 1 hour per visit, followed by 20% who stayed for less than 30 minutes. Only 8% remained for 1-2 hours, and 4% stayed for more than 2 hours. These findings suggest that students typically use the library for focused, short-term academic tasks rather than extended study sessions.

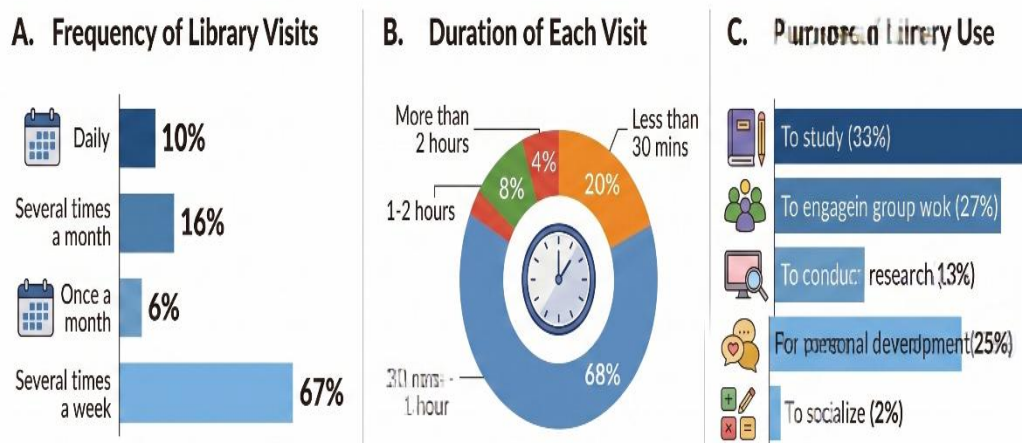


Figure 3: Patterns of library utilization among respondents

Panel C highlights the primary purpose of library use. The largest percentage of respondents (33%) indicated using the library for studying, followed by 27% for group work and 13% for research-related tasks. A smaller proportion utilized the space for socialization (2%), indicating that academic functions remain the dominant motivation for library visits. The data show that the library serves as a frequently accessed academic support space for focused study and collaborative learning. The implication is that sustaining a conducive, well-resourced, and efficiently managed library environment is essential to support regular academic engagement and enhance student productivity.

4.1.3 Level of student satisfaction with library services

Table 1 presents data on the level of student satisfaction with library services across six key dimensions.

Table 1: Level of student satisfaction with library services

Dimension	Weighted average (WA)
Library resources	4.31
Physical attributes	4.31
Personnel services	4.29
Library hours and availability	4.28
Ease of access	4.32
Events and programs	4.61
General weighted average (GWA)	4.35

The results show that all areas were rated *Very Satisfied*, with weighted averages ranging from 4.28 to 4.61. Among the dimensions, “Events and programs” received the highest rating (WA = 4.61), indicating that respondents highly appreciated the library’s organized activities and initiatives. This is followed by “Ease of access” (WA = 4.32), “Library resources”, and “Physical attributes” (both

WA = 4.31), suggesting that the respondents were pleased with the availability of materials and the physical condition of the library. "Personnel services" (WA = 4.29) and "Library hours and availability" (WA = 4.28) also garnered very positive ratings, reflecting satisfaction with staff support and operational schedules.

The overall general weighted average of 4.35, interpreted as *Very Satisfied*, indicates that respondents held a consistently positive perception of the library services at RSU-SFC. These findings imply that the library is effectively meeting students' academic and service-related expectations, while continuous improvement efforts may further enhance already strong satisfaction levels.

4.1.4 Relationship between the frequency of library visits and respondents' level of satisfaction with library services

Table 2 reflects the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis examining the relationship between respondents' frequency and duration of library visits and their level of satisfaction with library utilization.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlations for library utilization and satisfaction

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>FV</i>	<i>LU</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i> ²
Frequency of visit (FV)	248	59.83	15.24	-	0.04	.521	0.0016
Duration of visit (DV)	48	89.30	3.28	-0.03	-	.684	0.0009

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *FV* = frequency of visit; *DV* = duration of visit; *LU* = library utilization; *p* = probability value; *r*² = coefficient of determination

The results show that frequency of visit (FV) had a very weak positive correlation with library utilization (LU) ($r = 0.04$) and was not statistically significant ($p = .521$). Similarly, duration of visit (DV) demonstrated a very weak negative correlation ($r = -0.03$) with library utilization and was likewise not statistically significant ($p = .684$). The coefficients of determination ($r^2 = 0.0016$ for frequency and $r^2 = 0.0009$ for duration) indicate that both variables explain less than 1% of the variance in respondents' satisfaction levels.

These findings suggest that neither how often students visit the library nor how long they stay significantly influences their level of satisfaction with library services. In other words, satisfaction appears to be shaped more by the quality of services, resources, environment, and staff interactions rather than by mere frequency or duration of use. The implication is that improving service quality and user experience may have a greater impact on student satisfaction than simply increasing visitation rates.

4.1.5 Significant differences in library utilization patterns and satisfaction levels among respondents when grouped according to selected demographic characteristics

Table 3 presents the significant differences in library utilization patterns and satisfaction levels among respondents when grouped according to selected demographic characteristics.

Table 3: Library utilization patterns and interpretation

Dimension	Key result	Overall percentage	Pattern interpretation	Implication
Frequency of visits	Several times a week	67.36%	The majority of respondents are frequent users	Strong engagement and consistent academic reliance on library services
	Once a week / monthly	21.9%	Moderate engagement	Occasional academic use
	Daily	1.24%	Very rare	Library not used as daily academic base
Duration of stay	30 mins – 1 hour	67.77%	Short but consistent visits	Focused academic tasks
	Less than 30 mins	20.25%	Quick access usage	Task-specific visits
	More than 2 hours	3.72%	Rare extended stay	Limited long-duration research activity
Purpose of visit	To study	32.64%	Primary individual academic purpose	Library as structured study space
	Group work	27.27%	Strong collaborative use	Supports peer interaction
	Borrow/ return books	14.05%	Moderate traditional usage	Resource circulation still relevant
	Socializing	1.24%	Minimal	Library perceived as academic, not social

The results in Table 3 show that the majority of respondents visited the library several times a week (67.36%), indicating strong and consistent academic engagement. Only a small percentage reported daily visits (1.24%), suggesting that while the library is frequently used, it is not necessarily relied upon as a daily academic base. In terms of duration, most respondents stayed for 30 minutes to 1 hour (67.77%), reflecting focused and task-oriented use rather than prolonged research sessions. Very few respondents indicated staying for more than two

hours (3.72%), which may indicate limited long-duration research or extended academic work in the facility.

Regarding the purpose of the visit, studying (32.64%) and group work (27.27%) were the primary reasons for visiting, confirming that the library functions both as an individual study space and a collaborative learning environment. Borrowing and returning books (14.05%) remained relevant but were no longer the dominant function, while socializing (1.24%), as the purpose of the visit, was minimal, reinforcing the perception of the library as an academic rather than social space. Overall, the findings suggest that the library is consistently utilized for structured academic tasks, emphasizing its continued relevance in supporting focused learning and collaborative activities.

4.2 Qualitative Results

The qualitative findings are summarized in Table 4. The analysis generated five major themes reflecting students' experiences and perceptions of library services, including academic support, learning environment, staff interaction, areas for improvement, and personal growth.

Table 4: Thematic matrix of respondents' experiences and perceptions of library services

Major theme	Sub-themes	Direct narratives of participants
1. Library as a source of academic support and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to physical resources • Access to digital materials • Academic focus and productivity • Affordable learning alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The library plays an important role in my life as a student because when I go to the library, I can focus, and I can also use the library resources like books and computers."</i> (P1) • <i>"The availability of resources, particularly those not requiring online connectivity, is essential for me as a student."</i> (P9) • <i>"The library has been instrumental in my academic success at RSU-SFC by providing access to essential resources and a conducive study environment."</i> (P2)
2. Conducive environment for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet atmosphere • Organized and welcoming space • Strategic location • Overcrowding concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I feel a sense of calm and focus when I enter the library The quiet environment helps me concentrate better than studying at home."</i> (P1) • <i>"It's like a classroom full of books I see it as my 'second classroom' - quiet, comfortable."</i> (P9) • <i>"The library feels very calm, but I prefer it when it is not crowded."</i> (P3)
3. Frequent visits and personal interaction with library staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased familiarity with services • Research assistance • Rapport and personalized support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Frequent visits make me more comfortable using the library resources."</i> (P1) • <i>"If I need help with research, the librarians are always there to guide me."</i> (P2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The librarians remember my name and know what subjects I like."</i> (P3)
4. Suggestions for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group study spaces • Faster Wi-Fi 	

improving the library experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy adjustments • Expansion of physical space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I would love to see more group study spaces with whiteboards or smart screens."</i> (P1) • <i>"I would improve the library's Wi-Fi speed."</i> (P2) • <i>"I would change the rule that prohibits students from bringing their bags into the library."</i> (P7) • <i>"A larger library would provide more room for students to study comfortably."</i> (P8)
5. Memorable library experiences and personal growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff assistance • Acts of kindness • Sense of belonging • Learning proper library use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"A librarian helped me find the exact book I needed for a class presentation."</i> (P1) • <i>"It was small but still a sweet and memorable gesture of kindness from the staff."</i> (P3) • <i>"It was then I learned the proper way to borrow books."</i> (P9)

The qualitative findings in Table 4 show that participants viewed the RSU-SFC Library as more than just a place to access books. It served as a dependable academic support system where they could focus, access essential resources, and strengthen their learning. Many participants described the library as a "second classroom", highlighting how its quiet, organized, and welcoming environment helps them concentrate better than at home. Frequent visits and positive interactions with library staff also increased their confidence and satisfaction, as personalized assistance and friendly rapport made them feel supported and valued in their academic journey.

At the same time, participants expressed practical suggestions for improvement, such as adding more group study spaces, improving Wi-Fi speed, adjusting certain policies, and expanding the physical area to reduce overcrowding. These insights reflect a genuine desire to enhance an already meaningful space. Their memorable experiences, especially acts of kindness and helpful guidance from staff, reveal that the library fosters not only academic growth but also a sense of belonging and personal development. Overall, the library emerged as both a learning hub and a supportive community space that plays an important role in students' academic and personal lives.

5. Discussion

The results show that students continue to view the library as an essential academic space rather than merely a support facility. Most respondents reported frequent visits, primarily for studying and group work, and expressed high satisfaction across resources, services, and physical attributes. These findings are consistent with Alenzuela et al. (2023), who found that library utilization in a Philippine public university contributes positively to academic success. They also align with Rabelo et al. (2024), who emphasized that research on student experience increasingly frames academic libraries as dynamic environments that shape engagement, belongingness, and learning outcomes. Moreover, the strong appreciation for quiet spaces and structured environments echoes Mizrachi and

Salaz (2022), who noted that even in the post-pandemic context, students still value physical academic spaces for focused and meaningful engagement with learning materials. These patterns are further supported by Seno-Sanoria (2024), reinforcing the continuing relevance of academic libraries as structured learning environments.

In terms of student satisfaction, the consistently high ratings across all service dimensions suggest that the library effectively meets students' academic and informational needs. The positive evaluation of support staff, facilities, and services highlights the importance of user-centered approaches in shaping meaningful academic experiences. These findings reinforce the idea that satisfaction is closely linked to perceived service quality and the overall learning environment.

However, the statistical findings concerning the relationship between utilization and satisfaction indicate that frequency and duration of visits were not significantly associated with satisfaction levels. This suggests that simply using the library more often does not automatically increase positive perceptions. These results support Iqbal et al. (2022), who argued that satisfaction is influenced more by service quality, system effectiveness, and information relevance than by usage metrics alone. Similarly, Alotaibi et al. (2022) observed that students evaluate institutional library services in comparison with alternative platforms such as Google Scholar, and their continued intention to use library systems depends largely on convenience, accessibility, and perceived value. In this sense, quality of experience appears to matter more than quantity of visits, a finding also supported by Sumalinog et al. (2025).

The findings further reveal that students' demographic characteristics, including age, sex, year level, and academic program, influence patterns of library utilization and satisfaction. The predominance of younger students, particularly those aged 20–24 and lower, suggests that library engagement is closely associated with academic demands during foundational stages of higher education. These students are more likely to rely on structured learning environments and accessible academic resources, which explains the frequent but relatively short-duration visits observed in the study. Similarly, the balanced representation of male and female respondents indicates that satisfaction with library services is not strongly differentiated by sex, but rather shaped by shared academic needs and experiences.

These findings align with Rabelo et al. (2024) and Scoulas et al. (2024), who emphasized that student engagement with academic libraries varies according to disciplinary context, learning requirements, and user characteristics. Furthermore, Matthews and Johnson (2023) highlighted that students' academic background and learning preferences significantly influence their interaction with library resources. Taken together, these results suggest that demographic and academic variables play a meaningful role in shaping how students utilize and evaluate library services, underscoring the need for responsive and inclusive library strategies that cater to diverse learner profiles.

Moreover, variations across student groups suggest that demographic characteristics influence patterns of engagement and satisfaction. These differences indicate that students' academic contexts shape how they access and evaluate library services, emphasizing the need for more responsive and inclusive library strategies. The qualitative themes generated from thematic analysis further deepen these findings. Participating students described the library as welcoming, supportive, and personally meaningful, particularly in their interactions with support staff and in collaborative learning situations. Behavioral and social identity factors may also influence how students engage with academic library environments (Asimah & Asimah, 2025).

While Lu et al. (2022) highlighted barriers in academic collaboration, including challenges in knowledge-creation processes, the present findings suggest that supportive environments and accessible services may help mitigate such barriers at the local level. However, participants' calls for improved Wi-Fi, expanded group spaces, and enhanced digital tools indicate that infrastructure remains a critical area for strengthening collaborative and information practices. Finally, the broader shift toward technological integration in education, discussed by Kamalov et al. (2023), reinforces the need for libraries to adapt in increasingly digital and hybrid learning ecosystems while preserving their role as structured academic communities. Recent studies have also highlighted the growing role of smart library services in shaping student engagement and expectations (Khan et al., 2025).

Based on these findings and their implications, the key conclusions of the study are presented in the following section.

6. Conclusions

The academic library remains a vital component of students' learning experiences, serving not only as a repository of resources but also as a structured environment that supports academic focus, productivity, and growth. Participating students reported consistently high levels of satisfaction across library resources, facilities, personnel services, and accessibility, and that they continued to perceive the library as an important academic space despite the increasing availability of digital alternatives. However, the findings also reveal that frequency and duration of library visits are not significantly associated with satisfaction levels, indicating that students' perceptions are shaped more by the quality of services, accessibility of resources, and overall user experience than by usage patterns alone.

The findings carry important implications for academic library management and institutional policy. Rather than focusing solely on increasing library usage, efforts should prioritize enhancing service quality, improve accessibility, and strengthen the overall learning environment. Investments in technological infrastructure, including reliable Internet connectivity and digital resources, are essential to support evolving academic demands. In addition, expanding collaborative learning spaces and maintaining responsive, student-centered support services can further enhance engagement and satisfaction. These findings

reinforce the role of academic libraries as dynamic learning environments that contribute to students' academic success, engagement, and sense of belonging.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The study was conducted within a single campus context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions. In addition, while the mixed-methods design provided a comprehensive understanding of student experiences, the qualitative sample was relatively small and focused on regular library users. Future research may expand the scope by including multiple institutions, larger and more diverse samples, and comparative analyses across academic disciplines. Further studies may also explore the impact of emerging digital technologies and hybrid learning environments on students' library engagement and satisfaction.

7. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. No financial, personal, or institutional relationships influenced the conduct, analysis, or reporting of this study.

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